

people who work for companies that don't provide health insurance. Why should health insurance be tax deductible for General Motors but not for Joe Brown? We think that is discrimination. We think everybody ought to be treated the same.

Now, my final point. You have heard our Democrat colleagues and our President say that the Republican tax cut is unfair. Normally, what they mean in saying it is unfair is something like: Do you realize that about 30 percent of Americans will get no tax cut from the Republican tax cut? You hear that and you say that doesn't sound right. But what they never point out is, roughly 30 percent of American families pay no taxes. We are talking about cutting income taxes, and about a third of American families pay no income tax.

Let me tell you how I feel about this. Taxes are for taxpayers. Tax cuts are for taxpayers. Everybody doesn't get Medicaid. Everybody doesn't get Medicare. Everybody doesn't get food stamps. Everybody doesn't get welfare. You have to qualify for those programs by either paying money in, in the case of Medicare, or being poor, in the case of Medicaid, food stamps, and welfare.

Republicans feel very strongly that tax cuts are for taxpayers. If you don't pay taxes, you don't qualify for a tax cut. That brings me to the final point I want to make. Some people say, well, maybe there could be a compromise between Congress and the President. Let me tell you why there can't and why there is not going to be. It looks as if the President has proposed a \$300 billion tax cut, we have proposed almost \$800 billion, and there is \$500 billion between us. So it doesn't take a genius to figure out you could end up somewhere in the middle.

Let me tell you why it is not going to happen. When the Congressional Budget Office looked at the President's tax plan, they found \$245 billion for USA accounts and concluded that it actually increases spending by \$95 billion, net, over 10 years. Basically the President's tax cut is a set of subsidies that are given to people who by and large do not pay taxes, so that it is really an expenditure instead of a tax cut.

Instead of being \$500 billion apart, the plain truth is, we are closer to \$1 trillion apart. I think in this case, rather than fool around in trying to find some midpoint between minus \$95 billion, which is a tax increase of \$95 billion, and an \$800 billion tax cut, the best thing to do when the President vetoes the tax cut is to let the veto stand. We don't have the votes to override the veto. The best thing to do is to take it to the American voters and let the voters decide in November of next year what they want.

I don't think at this point that a compromise can be worked out. I think basically we are going to have to make a decision as to what we want. That is

how democracy works. You make a decision when the American people go to the polls. I think on this tax cut we are not going to find a middle ground. I think we are going to have to let the American people move the middle ground in the election.

But I think there is something we have to do. I want to stay with the spending caps. It is clear now, when you count all the emergency spending, much of which is not emergency, when you get into all of the bookkeeping gimmicks that ultimately will be used, that we are not going to stay within the spending caps, that we are going to spend beyond those caps. I am sorry about that. I think it is a mistake.

But there is one barrier we have not yet broken. It is a barrier where I believe, when the President vetoes the tax bill, we have to draw the line. We have to draw the line in saying, Mr. President, we can't make you give this money back to the American people but we can stop you from spending the Social Security surplus.

I hope Republicans will have courage enough to stand up and say no to any proposal that takes the Social Security surplus, plunders it, and spends it on general government. I can tell you that I intend to stand by that position. I am hopeful that Republicans in the Senate and the House will stand by it. It is not going to be easy.

Our appropriators in both the House and the Senate and the President tell us that unless we spend vast amounts of additional money, the world is going to come to an end in one of a variety of ways.

I think the time has basically come to say to the President that we can't make you cut taxes but we can stop you from spending this money.

That is what we want to do.

I thank my colleagues for their indulgence. I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VOINOVICH). The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

REDUCING THE FEDERAL DEBT

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I know the Senator from Maine is waiting to speak on the floor. Let me just take 2 or 3 minutes. I will be mercifully brief. I wanted to make a couple of comments, however, before we discontinue this session for the week, especially in light of the comments that were just made by my distinguished colleague from Texas.

We have returned from an August recess in which most of us spent a great deal of time in our home States around America talking to our constituents about their hopes and their dreams and their aspirations.

One of the things I found in North Dakota is that people believe very strongly that if this country is blessed with better economic times—and we

certainly have had good economic times in recent years—that produce a budget surplus, we ought to as a country decide to use a significant part of that surplus to reduce the Federal debt. If during bad economic times you increase the Federal debt, during good economic times you ought to reduce the Federal debt.

We have a \$5.7 trillion Federal debt. We have been very fortunate to eliminate the yearly Federal budget deficit, but we still have this debt that we have run up as a country over many years. It seems to me that one of the best things for America's future to use some of the expected future surplus to reduce this debt.

But it is important in the context of a discussion of the type we just heard about tax cuts to understand the following: There is not yet a surplus. There are only economists who estimate in the next 10 years we will have a surplus. These are economists who don't know what will happen in the future. They do not have the foggiest notion. They are giving us an educated guess.

Prior to the last recession in America, 35 of the 40 leading economists said in the next year we will have sustained economic growth. In fact, almost all of the leading economists were wrong. The next year we had a recession.

A friend of my mine described the field of economics as psychology pumped up with a little helium. That is probably a pretty good description. I, in fact, taught economics for a couple of years. Economists are telling us that we will have 10 years of economic good times and therefore very large budget surpluses. On that basis, we have people in this Congress who say: Well, if that is the case, let us enact a very sizable tax cut.

So the Congress enacted a \$792 billion tax cut over 10 years, this despite the fact that we don't yet have a budget surplus, we only have projections of budget surpluses.

I voted against the \$792 billion proposed tax cut. It is, in my judgment, unwise to cut taxes and therefore decrease revenues when we don't have actual surpluses, only projections. There is plenty of time in the future to deal with surpluses, if in fact they exist. And if we can't agree on how to deal with them and the best of all worlds will occur, it will mean that the Federal debt is reduced because Congress doesn't decide what else to do with the surplus.

It is interesting that with all of this discussion in August back home around the country, I think most Members of the Senate discovered that their constituents believed that to rush to propose a very sizable tax cut with only an economic projection over the next 10 years was not a very thoughtful or appropriate way to deal with this country's fiscal policy.

We have had good fiscal policy in this country that has given some people the confidence that we are doing the right things. Almost 7 years ago, we had an enormous annual Federal budget deficit. It was \$290 billion, and it was growing. Now it is gone. Why? Because this Congress had the courage to say we are not going to put up with that anymore. We are going to change direction and strategy. And we did. We had a vote. By one vote in the Senate, we changed this country's fiscal policy. It was a tough vote and a political vote. An easy vote would have been to say: Don't count me in on that. It actually raised taxes on income for some folks. Don't count me in on that. That is unpopular. Well, count me in. I voted for it. I am proud that I did. It was the right thing. This country was on the wrong track.

We changed the approach to fiscal policy and said to the American people that we were willing to do tough things. We were willing to make tough decisions. Guess what happened. The American people, I think as a result, have more confidence in the future. This entire economy rests on the matter of confidence. If they are confident, they do certain things. If they are confident, they buy a car, they buy a home, they take a vacation, and do the kind of things that move this economy along. If they are not confident about the future, they decide not to make those decisions, they decide to withhold this purchase, or that purchase, and it affects the economy.

What we did about 7 years ago dramatically changed the fiscal policy of this country. This country has had unprecedented economic expansion, and a huge and growing Federal budget deficit is now eliminated.

What remains is the Federal debt that occurred from all of those years of spending. The question is, What should we do about that? The answer for many in this Senate who voted to pass a tax cut was to say what we should do about that is essentially ignore that; let's provide a very large tax cut right now just based on projections by economists who often cannot even remember their home address. That is not good policy. I am pleased that I voted against it.

I think most Americans believe that the right approach for this Congress is to continue on this path we are on of good solid fiscal policy, believing that if and when we have true, good economic times and significant budget surpluses, a major part of that ought to be used to reduce the Federal debt. What greater gift can we give to America's children than to eliminate the Federal debt of \$5.7 trillion?

Let me thank my colleague from Maine. She has been most patient. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

(The remarks of Ms. COLLINS pertaining to the introduction of S. 1576 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, seeing no one seeking recognition, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Vermont.

VERMONT FOLIAGE

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I rise today on an issue of the utmost importance to Vermonsters. I recently returned from a wonderful month in my home State of Vermont. I visited farms and downtowns, talked to teachers, parents, and business men and women from all over our State, and enjoyed the beautiful Vermont summer. However, as I and countless of Americans know, nothing compares to Vermont in all of its autumn glory. I would like to read the following proclamation, that I received when I was visiting the picturesque town of Stowe, VT:

VERMONT FOLIAGE CHALLENGE PROCLAMATION

Inasmuch as Vermont is acknowledged throughout the known universe to be the home of the most spectacular fall foliage.

And inasmuch as certain ill informed media reports have implied that Vermont's legendary foliage display this year may be less spectacular than usual.

And inasmuch as Vermont's fall foliage display is always the best and brightest on this planet or any other.

We, of the Green Mountain State, hereby issue a challenge, open to all Senators, to wit:

That as of twelve noon on October 1, 1999, the fall foliage in Vermont will be the most colorful, most spectacular, and most photogenic of any venue on Earth.

And inasmuch as any challenge worth issuing deserves to be honored with a prize, we of the Green Mountain State hereby offer as proof of our challenge the quality of ten gallons of last spring's Vermont's finest Grade A Fancy Maple Syrup from Nebraska Knoll Sugar Farm of Stowe, Vermont, to be collected in Stowe.

Respectfully tendered, the Stowe Area Association.

I don't know about where you come from, but 10 gallons of Vermont Fancy Maple Syrup are worth their weight in gold! I would like to see anyone try and meet that challenge.

From Bennington to Derby Line, from Fair Haven to St. Johnsbury, in the months of September and October Vermont's Green Mountains become a painter's palette of rich colors. Nothing refreshes the soul as we head into the cold winter months like the invigorating rush one gets from a visit to

Vermont when she is decked out in prime foliage.

The brisk autumn weather and the breathtaking beauty of nature's fall canvases are unparalleled anywhere in the 50 States, or even anywhere in the world. Come see for yourself.

Mr. President, before I came to the Chamber, I received word that my esteemed colleague from the State of New York, Senator SCHUMER, has risen to the Vermont Foliage Challenge. Senator SCHUMER has offered 10 gallons of New York apple cider to our 10 gallons of Vermont Maple Syrup, stating that the foliage in the Empire State "will outshine the challenging leaves found in Vermont during this and every October." Anybody who has looked at apple leaves in the fall and maple leaves in the fall realizes there is no way to compare them. I am sure he was not referring to that. I am delighted to hear that the challenge has been accepted, and I am looking forward to enjoying a nice, tall, cold glass of New York apple cider later in the fall. I would like to mention that 10 gallons of maple syrup is not quite comparable to 10 gallons of apple cider, especially considering that it takes 40 gallons of sap to make 1 gallon of maple syrup. But this evens the odds, as it is about a million-to-one chance that Vermont will come out on the short end of the stick in this wager.

Mr. President, Mr. SCHUMER, who I think probably has some insecurity in making this challenge, whisked off to New York and is unable to be here to give his statement. But to acknowledge his courage in accepting the challenge, I ask unanimous consent that Senator SCHUMER's statement be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

• Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, today my esteemed colleague from Vermont stood in praise of the beauty of his fine State during the fall season. Nothing, he argued, could compare with the sight of the Green Mountain State's autumnal foliage. To that end, he reported a challenge issued by his fine constituents in Stowe; that on October 1 of this year, the changing leaves of Vermont would reign supreme.

I represent a contender to this challenge whose autumn beauty is destined to win any comparison with its bright flying colors of yellow, red, and orange. I am proud to represent the State of New York in this Senate, the Empire State, whose foliage will outshine the changing leaves found in Vermont during this and every October.

New York's fall splendor has been captured by a wide variety of artists, from the landscape painters of the Hudson River School to the soulful jazz of Vernon Duke's "Autumn in New York." I point to such representations as proof of our superiority in this venue, and invite any skeptics to visit